
THE PHILOSOPHICAL
POIESIS OF ZARATHUSTRA'S
VISION AND THE RIDDLE:
BACK INTO THE CIRCLE
OF TIME TOWARDS THE
GROUNDLESS

J a n k o M . L o z a r

Restlessness and peace – including peace of mind – seem to have been one of the most emblematic traits of the European cultural-historical drama since the very beginnings. Like the paradigmatic pairs of the Many and the One, or of doxa and episteme, it appears to be intrinsic to almost any philosophical endeavour, be it ancient or postmodern. And, as in every pair, due to our metaphysical faith in the absoluteness of the opposites, the first elements in all three pairs, the Many, doxa and restlessness, have all enjoyed, or suffered from, the reputation of representing the negative aspects of the meaning of life, and of life itself.

Or, at least, so it seems. Why? There is one crucial difference to be read from the phenomenon of restlessness, compared to the Many and doxa, upon which we need to shed light: restlessness, as the first element in the initially mentioned paradigm, in my opinion, remains grossly undervalued, and (thus) remains to be properly and seriously articulated. The issue of restlessness has so far been most ingeniously articulated by one of the most restless spirits of Europe: Friedrich Nietzsche. It may well seem inappropriate to start drawing nearer the negative eidetics of restlessness by referring to Nietzsche. Already a brief mention of his infamous will to power as the principle of restlessness, as constant destructive creative volitional agency, might suffice to warn us against the fruitlessness of such an undertaking.

Still, we have to ask ourselves, what if the most acute criticism of this phenomenality already lies hidden in the thinkers who are believed to be the most prominent and zealous advocates of the very same phenomenon? Could we not perhaps say that Nietzsche was most familiar

with the overpowering restless drive of self-overcoming and therefore also with the negative aspect of this metaphysical unrest? With this, we bring restlessness in an intimate relationship with measurelessness, and the famous ancient sentence of *homo mensura*.

It is well known that Heidegger, in his *European Nihilism*, makes use of the measure of man as one of the crucial criteria for explicating a historical-metaphysical standpoint, talking of Protagoras, Descartes and Nietzsche. And it is also well known that Nietzsche, together with Descartes, is grasped by Heidegger as a metaphysical thinker of subjectivity, which finds its measure solely in its circulating around itself. Thus Descartes' *cogito* as the sole subject in the universe, through representation, progressively expands in its ambition of gaining mastery over the entirety of beings. And Nietzsche's superman is understood as the extreme development of the same modern metaphysical momentum in the sense that everything is at the disposal of the will to power in its eternal circulation around itself as the will to will. In both thinkers, Heidegger, quite rightfully I suppose, detects a tendency to lose the measure through exaggeration and excess. But, as we all know, this is not the case with Protagoras as the author of *anthropos metron*.

Still, we have to ask ourselves whether Heidegger's dismissal is all there is to it. As we already asked, is there something to be found in Nietzsche that manages to evade the all-powerful truth of being understood as the will to power? Is there perhaps something entirely different to be found in Nietzsche's obvious favouring of the measureless truth of the will to power as constant over-powering? In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche swings his philosophical hammer with all his strength:

The ascetic ideal, you have guessed, was never anywhere a school of good taste, still less of good manners, – at best it was a school for hieratic manners, – which means it contains within itself something that is the deadly enemy of all good manners, – lack of measure, opposition to measure is itself a 'non plus ultra'.¹

¹ Nietzsche, F.: *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 108.

The Latin *non plus ultra* aims at the unsurpassable extreme. The fundamental reason for the eventuation, and the growing prevalence of ascetic ideals, according to Nietzsche, is resentment. There are a couple of passages in his *Genealogy*, which, in my opinion, point directly to what is at stake in resentment: fundamental misattunement. Now this would be my own rendering of the German *Grundverstimmung*, since the existing translations use the adjectival phrase “deeply depressed”, corresponding to Nietzsche’s actual use of the adjectival form of *die Gründlich-Verstimmte*. In paragraph 16, Nietzsche speaks of “physiologische Verstimmung”, which is rendered into English as “physiological upset”. In both cases, I believe, the translation underscores the German wording. *Verstimmung* is neither depression (it can be, but depression is only one possible psycho-somatic embodiment of misattunement) nor the state of being upset. Both translations underscore the original; the more suitable as well as more accurate rendering would be misattunement. Why? *Stimmung* as the root word in *Verstimmung* has been, particularly more lately in Heidegger translation, prevalently rendered as attunement, replacing the older version of mood. Needless to say, attunement is more accurate than mood, because it contains the rich allusiveness of the German *Stimmung*. We only need to mention the same meaning of the basic verb form in English and German: to tune a piano or *ein Klavier stimmen*. The one who adjusts musical instruments is called a tuner and *ein Stimmer* respectively, or a tune and *die Stimme* for that matter, where *die Stimme* can also mean the tune of one’s voice.

The fundamental misattunement is, according to Nietzsche, the crucial propellant of ascetic ideals, which are used as a vehicle to do away with the fundamental pain, lethargy or depression – more accurately, misattunement. For Nietzsche, ascetic ideals are, to put it in a nutshell, self-medicine propelled by resentment, and the medicine procured is to alleviate the unbearable pain of the fundamental misattunement.

In Nietzsche’s own words:

The ascetic ideal utilised to produce excess of feelings: to throw the human soul out of joint, plunging it into terror, frosts, fires and raptures to such an extent that it rids itself of all small and petty forms of lethargy (Germ. *Unlust*),

apathy (Germ. *Dumpfheit*) and depression (Germ. *Verstimmung*), as though hit by lightning.²

Perhaps the most telling feature of ascetic ideals, as inconspicuous as it may be, in terms of their invisible reverse side, is what Nietzsche calls *mechanical activity*. Again, and in a direction significantly different from that of the excessiveness of the Will to Power, the following passage points in the direction of Nietzsche turning a sceptical eye to an excess of restlessness:

Much more often than such a hypnotic total dampening of sensibility, of susceptibility to pain, which presupposes unusual powers, above all courage, contempt of opinion, ‘intellectual stoicism’, another training is tried to combat the condition of depression, which at all events is easier: mechanical activity. It is beyond doubt that with this, an existence of suffering is alleviated to a not inconsiderable extent: today people call this fact, rather dishonestly, ‘the blessing of work’. The alleviation consists of completely diverting the interest of the sufferer from the pain, – *so that constantly an action and yet another action enters consciousness and consequently little room is left for suffering*: because this chamber of human consciousness is small!³ [emphasis added]

This passage may come as a surprise to any scholar who favours Heidegger’s critical thrust against Nietzsche’s metaphysical nature of his Will to Power as constant self-overcoming or Nietzsche’s conception of being as constant presence.⁴ Indeed, does not Nietzsche in this passage explicate the issue of the *constancy* of action as a *troublesome* and highly improper temporal truth of being? “Constantly an action and yet another action enters consciousness”? Quite tellingly, if Heidegger condemns his Will to Power as what could be rendered in modern, non-philosophical terms as obsessive compulsive behaviour, it rather seems that he fails to grasp his genuine message because Nietzsche considers constant activity to be an inadequate response to the ailments of being, imbued in resentment. And the latter, as the groundless misattunement, propels ascetic ideals – and not only those, as we shall soon realise.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴ Both authors use the same temporal (problematic) predicate of constancy: Nietzsche speaks of “*beständig ein Thun*”, Heidegger of “*beständige Anwesenheit*”.

With this said, we are at once plunged into the cellar of the magnificent abode of metaphysics; at the very roots of the tree of knowledge, which are in tune with the ancient Greek word *diathesis*, and the modern words *Stimmung* or attunement. Let us just say for the sake of brevity here that the truth of attunements does not belong to onto-ego-theology, since attunement can be neither an entity nor the being of beings; rather, it moves to the evasive and elusive realm of being as being. With attunement, we move from the ground into the groundless.

Nietzsche and Heidegger

One further issue to be addressed here is the strong similarities between Nietzsche and Heidegger. The reason for this will become clearer later on, when we shall undertake a philosophical reading of Nietzsche's literary pearl vision from his *Zarathustra*. So let us explicate the strong analogies between their manners of thinking, moving from the more obvious to the less conspicuous:

- The first and most obvious one is the issue of nihilism, though the issue was thought and approached differently by each author. Still, as Heidegger readily admits in his *European Nihilism*, it was Nietzsche himself who understood nihilism (ingeniously and correctly) as a historical phenomenon.
- Related to it – and the debt to Nietzsche is already a bit less visible – the understanding of the history of philosophy as a regression from the great beginning in Pre-Socratic philosophy (Heraclitus, Protagoras!), rather than progression. In contrast to Hegel's – or Husserl's for that matter – conception of the history of philosophy, which so adamantly stresses the progression of the spirit from its humble beginnings in ancient Greece towards its final realisation and perfection in the modern idealist abode of absolute subjectivity, Nietzsche thrusts with a diametrically opposite conception, namely in that European culture, philosophy included, is a deteriorating process, starting with the downfall of the tragic culture, having bloomed in the times before the rise of the Socratic and/or Platonic spirit. Compared to this, Heidegger's historical diagnosis bears surprising resemblance to Nietzsche's insights. One need only mention here Heidegger's

stunning analyses of the primordality of Anaximander's, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Protagoras' thinking, and compare it to Nietzsche's praise of Protagoras as the sage who was still in tune with Pre-Socratic wisdom.

- The *polemos* or agonistic character of life. As many an interpretation of Heidegger's has (prevalently critically) shown, Heidegger, particularly in his middle period, has drawn profusely on Nietzsche's polemic and antagonistic understanding of the truth of being. Compare for example his understanding of truth as *aletheia* in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, where he speaks of the need to wring the truth from out of concealment.
- Life justified as an aesthetical phenomenon. The analogy is, or at least should be fairly obvious. The later Heidegger's accent on the priority of poetry as the primordial place of the "truthing of the truth", as the initial comportment of the human being, thus rendering the practical (not to mention the theoretical) comportment of *phronesis* and *techne* secondary, or the derivative forms of the poetic comportment. With this, we are moving fairly close to the need for a philosophical reading of Nietzsche's poetic vision.
- The priority of the event over entities, of being over beings, grammatically understood as the priority of the verb over the noun agent. As patently shown in a passage from his *On Genealogy of Morals*, there is indeed no neutral substratum called the lightning, which decides when or whether o flash or not. As Nietzsche says poignantly, all there is is the flashing. Now if we compare this to Heidegger's notions or phrasings such as the being of beings, the worlding of the world, the timing of time, the nihilation of nothing, the speaking of language, we can, and should, immediately recognise the origin of his language and thinking.
- The core of the will to power as a chorus of affects, each fighting for mastery over others, which renders all conceptions of the will as a monistic unity unconvincing. Now compare this with Heidegger's stress on the primordality of attunement, which enables *Dasein* to relate to something intentionally.
- Marriage of becoming and being: In Heidegger's *Anaximander's Saying* we read the following (2002, 250):

At the summit of the completion of Western philosophy the following words are said: "To stamp becoming with the character of being - that is the highest will to power." Thus wrote Nietzsche in a note entitled "Recapitulation." Going by the character of the handwriting we must locate the note in the year 1885, the time at which, having completed Zarathustra, he planned his great work of systematic metaphysics. "Being," as Nietzsche thinks it here, is "the eternal return of the same".

It is the mode of permanence in which the will to power wills itself and secures its own presencing as the being of becoming. This is how the being of beings is expressed in the final stage of the completion of metaphysics.⁵

And if we season this criticism with the "chilli quote" from his *Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (1967, 427): "this is a supremely spiritualised spirit of revenge", Heidegger is here, quite appropriately as it turns out, in starkest possible opposition to Nietzsche.

And yet, again in *Anaximander's Saying*, eight pages later, we read the following:

What, however, has its essential nature in such arrival and departure we would prefer to call the coming and the going rather than the being; for we have, for a long time, been accustomed to opposing becoming and being, as if becoming were nothing, not belonging within being, which has for a long time been understood as mere perdurance. If, however, becoming is, then we must think being in so essential a manner that it embraces becoming not in an emptily conceptual way but rather so that being bears and moulds the essence of becoming (*genesis - phthora*) in an essential way.⁶

If we compare Nietzsche's "to stamp becoming with the character of being" with Heidegger's "being bears and moulds the essence of becoming in an essential way", we cannot but realise how close, how intimately close both ontologies are, despite Heidegger's relentless criticism levelled at Nietzsche. In this sense, his criticism does indeed betray certain insincerity on the side of the thinker of the openness, *i.e.* frankness of being.

⁵ Heidegger, M.: *Off the Beaten Track*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, pp. 250–51. Again, for Nietzsche, permanence as *Beständigkeit* is a temporally troublesome issue belonging to the truth of resentment or the reign of ascetic idealism.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

- And lastly: the criticism of the understanding of time as a circularity of the infinite succession of now points. In the very end of his *Being and Time*, Heidegger severely attacks Hegel's and Aristotle's conception of time as a succession of now points, rendering them vulgar, and advocating instead a more primordial temporality as the overlapping of the three ecstasies of time. Now what about Nietzsche? Does he have anything to say on this issue? Is this perhaps somewhat related to the issue of the prevalence of neutral noun agents over the eventing of the verbalness of sheer being? With this last comparison, we have come closest to the least obvious as well as most intimate relatedness of the two thinkers. It also becomes clearer why we started with Nietzsche and his ingenious insight into the ascetic ideals story of the European spirit, understood as opposition to measure. And this begs us to move forward to the explication of Nietzsche's famous vision as the riddle of all riddles.

Nietzsche's Riddle of All Riddles

Let us start with the first part of the vision/riddle, or rather with the very first act of the confrontation of Zarathustra with the dwarf as the spirit of gravity:

"Stop, dwarf!" I said. "I – or you! But I am the stronger of us two – you do not know my abysmal thought! That – you could not bear!" – Then something happened that made me lighter, for the dwarf jumped down from my shoulder, the inquisitive one, and he crouched upon a stone there before me. But right there where we stopped was a gateway. "See this gateway, dwarf!" I continued.

"It has two faces. Two paths come together here; no one has yet walked them to the end. This long lane back: it lasts an eternity. And that long lane outward – that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they blatantly offend each other – and here at this gateway is where they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed at the top: 'Moment.'

But whoever were to walk one of them further – and ever further and ever on: do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?" –

"All that is straight lies," murmured the dwarf contemptuously. "All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle."

...

"You spirit of gravity!" I said, angrily. "Do not make it too easy on yourself! Or I shall leave you crouching here where you crouch, lame foot – and I bore you this high!"⁷

The story is, obviously, all about the understanding of time. The main emphasis, in proper accord with the tradition, is placed on the moment (Ger. *Augenblick*, sometimes rendered in English as the moment of vision). And the two lanes stretching outward in two directions are those of the past and the future. Firstly, we should take the overcoat off the riddle by hinting at – or, better, guessing – the true nature of the spirit of gravity, represented by the dwarf. One of the poems to be found in Nietzsche's *Jovial Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), says:

Der Gründliche

Ein Forscher ich? Oh spart dies Wort! -
Ich bin nur *schwer* – so manche Pfund!
Ich falle, falle immerfort
Und endlich auf den Grund!⁸

The Well-Grounded One

A scholar I? I've no such skill! –
I'm merely *grave* – just heavy set!
I fall and fall and fall until
I to the bottom get.

Nietzsche's original, if we are indeed to get closer to what Nietzsche jocularly hints at here, well merits a slightly different translation:

A scholar I? I've no such skill! –
I'm merely *grave* – many a pound!
I fall and fall until
I hit the ground.

⁷ Nietzsche, F.: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 124–25.

⁸ Nietzsche, F.: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft. Sämtliche Werke*. KSA 3, dtv/de Gruyter, München/Berlin 1999, p. 363

Obviously, the rendering “ground” for the German word *Grund* is better than “bottom”, because the latter fails to communicate what is fully at stake here. *Grund* and ground are both poetical and philosophical words: both the German and the English word, and Nietzsche must have been well aware of it, also introduce the Latin *ratio* into play: the reason. So the scholar as the grave one – or the spirit of gravity – is the opposite to the spirit of lightness in that in hitting upon the ultimate reason he also hits the ground.

So who then is the dwarf or the spirit of gravity, who, when challenged by the dismal prospect of time stretching back and forward into two eternities, answers through his teeth: “All that is straight lies,” and “all truth is crooked, time itself is a circle”? Zarathustra says that by shooting out this answer the spirit of gravity makes it too easy on itself. We have already intimated that Zarathustra speaks to the scholar, the philosopher. Why would he distance himself from his claim about time as circle? Why indeed would he reproach him for making it too easy on himself?

The story of Zarathustra’s climbing the steep hill with the dwarf, the spirit of heaviness and revenge, mounted on his shoulders, and his decision to confront him, now comes clearly to the fore in all its intuitive thrust and insight. In the last sentence, we have tacitly equated the spirit of heaviness with the spirit of revenge. Is this simply a careless addition? Or is this perhaps the first possible condition of coming to grips with the heaviness of the ultimate ground-seeker?

This, yes this alone is revenge itself: the will’s unwillingness toward time and time’s “it was.” Indeed, a great folly lives in our will; and it became the curse of all humankind that this folly acquired spirit! The spirit of revenge: my friends, that so far has been what mankind contemplates best; and wherever there was suffering, punishment was always supposed to be there as well.

For “punishment” is what revenge calls itself; with a lying word it hypocritically asserts its good conscience. And because in willing itself there is suffering, based on its inability to will backward – thus all willing itself and all living is supposed to be – punishment!

And now cloud upon cloud rolled in over the spirit, until at last madness preached: “Everything passes away, therefore everything deserves to pass away!”

And this itself is justice, this law of time that it must devour its own children” – thus preached madness.

“All things are ordained ethically according to justice and punishment. Alas, where is redemption from the flux of things and from the punishment called existence?” Thus preached madness.⁹

It is my contention that the truth of the eternal recurrence of the same is meant to reveal the truth of the dwarf’s (measureless, restless) misattunement. The eternal recurrence envisaged – and used as a grudge against the spirit of gravity – is the truth of mechanical activity; therefore, it does not belong to Zarathustra, who strives to overcome the spirit of gravity. The constancy of the now point being surpassed by yet another now point, and the circularity of it, is the truth of time/being, which needs to be overcome by another eternity.

Of course, since the dwarf as the spirit of heaviness is Zarathustra’s own most intimate matter (scholar as the spirit of gravity as a question directed to himself), the intuitive hammer thrust at the dwarf is also a thrust at Zarathustra, and at Nietzsche himself. To make the point clearer: the eternal recurrence, addressed initially in the vision, reveals the negative in Zarathustra himself, *and not the positive truth*, as advocated misleadingly by many an interpreter of Nietzsche: as the truth of the groundless misattunement.

The truth of time of the spirit of heaviness is that of the circularity of the incessant succession of now points. The temporal truth of the now, which is constantly running late through the no longer now and running ahead through the not yet now, running late for the proper now, missing it and falling into the no longer now – isn’t this running ahead and running late the very nature of the traditional truth of the now? From Aristotle’s *to nyn* all the way to Hegel’s *das Jetzt*?¹⁰ And thus constantly onwards and backwards, throwing us in the constant running ahead and running late motion (of the concept!); indeed, should we not

⁹ Nietzsche, F. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “On Redemption”, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 111. And just to remind ourselves of the numerous, and more than surprising, analogies between Nietzsche and Heidegger: the last sentence clearly evokes Anaximander’s saying, and Nietzsche patently calls for a non-moral, a “released-from-morality” ontological reading of time, just as Heidegger does in his *Anaximander’s Saying*.

¹⁰ Comp. Heidegger’s compelling critical thrust at Aristotle and Hegel in his *Being and time*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1996, pp. 385–91.

recognise in this the emblematic trait of the “opposition to measure, which is itself a ‘non plus ultra’”?

Opposition to measure is imprinted in the *truth* of time as a concession of now points. And opposition to measure is, according to Nietzsche, resentment as fundamental misattunement. Of course we don’t like it and we resent it and hate it that everything we really cherish in life is too soon lost in time and its “it was”. And boy do we resent it; indeed it does appear to be the harshest possible punishment; and never shall we forget it. And furthermore: if this punishment befalls me, is there any reason why anyone should escape it? Why should there be an exception to the punishing (Anaximander’s) rule of time? Thus, I resent it universally: and so be it, says the spirit of grave revenge: the universal, objective truth of time is to be the incessant circularity of now-points... In the dwarf’s quasi-disinterested objective ascertainment about the truth of time, Zarathustra recognises resentment, inner hate and vengefulness. Otherwise he would not be named the spirit of heaviness as the spirit of revenge.¹¹

Now it is time to continue with Zarathustra’s vision/riddle:

See this moment!” I continued. “From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane stretches backward: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever can already have passed this way before? Must not whatever can happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before? And if everything has already been here before, what do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been here? And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all things to come? Therefore – itself as well?

¹¹ Comp. Hegel’s Hegel, F.: *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury 1991, Part II: “Philosophy of Nature”, §201: “In time, it is said, everything arises and passes away, or rather, there appears precisely the abstraction of arising and falling away. [...] But time itself is this becoming, this existing abstraction, the Chronos who gives birth to everything and destroys his offspring. [...] For time in its concept is, like the concept itself generally, eternal, and therefore also absolute presence.” Quite randomly and with indifference, it seems, Hegel mentions Chronos as the main mythical truth of time. Of course we all know we resent him for his voracious appetite. And so does Hegel for that matter. Because if the solution to the savage, chronic nature of time is “absolute presence”, in its *constant* process of self-negatory self-affirmation, then is it fairly obvious that, according to Nietzsche, Hegel betrays mechanical activity of the concept/spirit/idea as the most proper response possible, and therefore also his ascetic idealism...

Thus I spoke, softer and softer, for I was afraid of my own thought and secret thoughts. Then, suddenly, I heard a dog howl nearby. Had I ever heard a dog howl like this? My thoughts raced back. Yes! When I was a child, in my most distant childhood: – then I heard a dog howl like this. And I saw it too, bristling, its head up, trembling in the stillest midnight when even dogs believe in ghosts: – so that I felt pity. *For the full moon had passed over the house, silent as death, and it had just stopped, a round smolder - stopped on the flat roof just as if on a stranger's property –*

[...]

Where now was the dwarf? And the gateway? And the spider? And all the whispering? Was I dreaming? Was I waking? I stood all of a sudden among wild cliffs, alone, desolate, in the most desolate moonlight.¹² [emphasis added]

First we judge and then we understand, says Nietzsche poignantly. The judgement underlying the understanding of time as the now point (always already no longer now and not yet now), the traditional understanding, present from Aristotle onwards, is, in my opinion, and this is also what I believe to be Nietzsche's claim, moulded in resentment. It is because we resent time in its "it was", its unjust transient character, that we want this punishment to affect everybody, without exception. If this be so for me, then let it be so for everybody, and I also make sure I never forget what I resent: the truth of time is therefore the continuous flux of now points always already pushed aside by the new now. And this is the truth of the spirit of heaviness.

The spirit of heaviness, being thrown into a suffering flux of perturbation, cherishes a dream of being drawn out of the flux by the hand of the almighty, into timeless eternity. Nietzsche confronts the dwarf with the non-possibility of such bailing out. The future is radically closed, especially for the possibility of being saved, rescued. Zarathustra confronts the dwarf with the nothingness of the possibility of the ultimate leap into beyond. "What do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been here? And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all things to come? Therefore – itself as well?"

¹² Nietzsche, F. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 126.

And here comes his first harbinger of a recovery, and rehabilitation of the long lost measure: anxiety. The latter is unbearable for the spirit of heaviness, and he disappears, while Zarathustra finds the courage to linger awhile in the deadliest of nights, with the naked moon.

Why talk of anxiety all of a sudden? “For the full moon had passed over the house, silent as death, and it had just stopped, a round smolder - stopped on the flat roof just as if on a stranger’s property.” Now we have to ask ourselves: what has happened to Zarathustra, who perseveres in the horrifying drawing away of it all into the eternal past? What is it that manages to strip all beings of their meaning, indeed even of their very names? For the moon, as Zarathustra himself says, turns from a full moon into a mere round smolder? According to Heidegger, and obviously also to Nietzsche, it is the unveiling of the attunement of anxiety.

The dwarf disappears because he is not able to face his own truth of resentment over being – over and over again plunged in the all-the-sameness of the same disappointment. *The dwarf as the spirit of heaviness and revenge cannot face, let alone articulate and witness his own **angry judgement on life**, because it is the truth of his own fundamental **misattunement** and particularly because, in digging through the ground of attunements, one is, sooner or later, obliged to run into the groundless, which opens up, which yawns (Gr. chaos) in the groundless attunement of anxiety.*

Let us recall and recuperate: ascetic ideals (to be followed) demand an excess of (or opposition to) measure of any kind, in order to reacquire the lost measure. In other words: in order to be able (as a fundamentally misattuned person) to reacquire the attunement, you are obliged to throw your soul out of joint (through starvation, self-infliction of pain, pouring oil on the fire of bad conscience, exercise in constant work of the concept as self-negativity) not to be in tune with the good measure or golden mean of everyday life. Resist all measure in order to reacquire the good or best possible measure. Fall out of tune in order to regain the best possible attunement with the ultimate good. In other words, the soul, thrown in the groundless misattunement, strives to run ahead of its current state in order not to be running late for or to be behind time for the promised Measure of all Measures. Again and again, isn’t this running ahead and running late the very nature of the tradi-

tional truth of the now? From Aristotle's *to nyn* onwards: it is no more and not yet; and thus constantly, throwing us in the constant running ahead and running late motion. The temporal truth of the now, which is constantly running ahead through the not yet now and running late through the no longer now, is the emblematic trait of the "opposition to measure, which is itself a 'non plus ultra'". Small wonder the dwarf as the spirit of heaviness does not want to see or realise his own truth of always running late and running ahead. And small wonder Kant, Hegel and Husserl all conceive of attunement as the accompanying phenomenality to be crucially unrelated to the rationality of manhood.

What is actually to be gained in thinking towards anxiety in its proto-metaphysical sense? Thought on the level of being as being, the attunement of anxiety, temporally taken, manifests itself as the passing away of time. There is no time as such; no concept of time which manages to set itself free from the chronic time into eternity. There is only the eventing, unbearable as it may be, of the passing away. Now let us consider the advantage that can be surmised from our being overwhelmed by this sheer passing away; moving away, passing away and absencing, as the spatial, temporal and ontological truth of the groundless attunement of anxiety.

Persevering in the truth of time as constant shifting of nows, passing through the door of the moment, letting oneself be *in* the passing away of the now. By not making it too easy for oneself: plunging oneself in the no longer now, as the experience of the oozing away of everything, as sheer lingering in the passing away of time; with the real novelty being the lingering of time in its sheer passing away: through anxiety, one is released from fear as the supreme judge over the truth of time in the ever changing time.

I spoke of running late and running ahead (of time and myself) as the basic traits of groundless misattunement. What could the not-running late and not-running ahead of anxiety mean in this context? Anxiety gives, or better gives back time the time for lingering in the passing away. Anxiety in this sense is the slowing down of time as the eventing of the "no more". It reveals the time lingering in its passing away. The time witnessed in anxiety is no longer the yoke of "no more" and "not yet".

Is it possible to be in the manner of passing away without being in the manner of running ahead, which is always already too late? The anxiety lingers in the absencing, and in the absencing it is me who lingers. This is the crucial point. We should take care not to overlook the slowness of time passing away in anxiety. The following question is crucial: does the disclosure of passing away, going away and absencing allow for – hurrying? For running ahead? Mechanical activity? Can we, lingering in the passing away – be running late at all? Does it allow the running late? What calls for running ahead? Can I hear the meaninglessness of the following phrase: running ahead of passing away? Overtaking the absencing?

The story narrated in Zarathustra's vision and riddle is that of the birth of the measure of man as mortal, as the birthplace of mere lingering. Running ahead and running late could be understood as the basic trait of fear as running away from the groundlessness of sheer lingering in passing away. Thus, the true and most proper name of groundless misattunement could very well be *fear* as lack of measure, opposition to measure.¹³

Anxiety as the slowness of passing away in the farewell from being is the birthplace of non-running late and non-running ahead. How exactly? By lingering in going away towards – the going away. But it obviously takes courage to do it...

From fear to anxiety: from the temporal truth of the now (as constantly no longer now and not yet now, which evokes in man the misattunement of constantly running late and running ahead) to the pri-

¹³ Comp. Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Digireads.com Publishing 2009, p. 49): "THE knowledge, which is at the start or immediately our object, can be nothing else than just that which is immediate knowledge, knowledge of the immediate, of what is. We have, in dealing with it, to proceed, too, in an immediate way, to accept what is given, not altering anything in it as it is presented before us, and keeping mere apprehension (*Auffassen*) free from conceptual comprehension (*Begreifen*)."

The funny part of the solemn beginning of a solemn chapter is that the English rendering of *Auffassen* intimates exactly what is at stake for Nietzsche: namely that the initial "truthing", as sheer apprehension, also implies apprehension as "a feeling of fear that something bad may happen." (Collins-Cobuild, *Lingea Lexicon* 2002). Comp. also Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*: "How now? Is the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps a kind of fear of, and escape from, pessimism?"

mary temporal truth of passing away (without any running late and ahead), evoking the groundless attunement of anxiety.

The emphasis is not on the now as the kairoic moment of transition, as intimated in Löwith and Heidegger¹⁴, but on the lingering awhile in the self-annihilation of the moment. The constancy of the now point is the truth of time belonging to the spirit of gravity and revenge. With the disappearance of the moment, the dwarf disappears, too.

What remains is the lingering of anxiety. What is the temporal nature of being in anxiety? Could we not rather, or better, say that what remains is the anxiety of lingering?

The riddle within

Now is it really so that I somehow managed so solve the riddle? Not at all! The riddle simply turned about a bit, and revealed its new enigmatic face, expressed in the following questions: How does the groundless attunement of anxiety transform itself into groundless joviality? How does the lingering of absencing shift and jump up (like the shepherd) to the lingering of presencing? With this question, Zarathustra's riddle shows yet another, and far more riddle-ridden face.

And truly, I saw something the like of which I had never seen before. A young shepherd I saw; writhing, choking, twitching, his face distorted, with a thick black snake hanging from his mouth. Had I ever seen so much nausea and pale dread in one face? Surely he must have fallen asleep? Then the snake crawled into his throat – where it bit down firmly. My hand tore at the snake and tore – in vain! It could not tear the snake from his throat. Then it cried out of me: “Bite down! Bite down!”

[...]

Meanwhile the shepherd bit down as my shout advised him; he bit with a good bite! Far away he spat the head of the snake – and he leaped to his feet. – No longer shepherd, no longer human – a transformed, illuminated, laughing being! Never yet on earth had I heard a human being laugh as he laughed!¹⁵

¹⁴ Comp. Löwith's *Nietzsches Philosophie des Ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, and Heidegger's *Nietzsche I*.

¹⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 127.

It is a story of not rescuing oneself from the clutches of dirty, rotten, evil time (Chronos as the devourer of his children), but of entering it in a more proper way: *Dasein* is not in time, but is the time in its timing/ecstasies. The message is: don't get rescued from time, but enter it properly, *become* time in its timing, which is groundless in its nature and revealed in the groundless attunements of anxiety and joviality. Here, the possibility of reacquiring the long lost measure, already present in Nietzsche, dawns upon us: dwelling as lingering.

The eternal recurrence, willed by Nietzsche, is not at all the one depicted in the first part of the vision/riddle. Rather, the latter belongs to the spirit of gravity, to the long – perhaps too long – philosophical tradition, starting with Aristotle and culminating in Hegel. What then is the eternity of recurrence, advocated by the spirit of *lightness*? Could we perhaps grab hold of the first hint at this enigmatic conception of time in the following sentence (Nietzsche, 2006, 299): “*Eternal liveliness*, however, is what counts: what do ‘eternal life’, or life at all, matter to us!”¹⁶ And move a step forward with yet another, even more telling passage, taken from his posthumous fragments: “Can’t you see how time is nothing but exuberance, and space but joviality (Germ. *Ausgelassenheit*)? And what wantonness of freedom can be more wanton than my rolling wheel of reason and consequence?”¹⁷

Why is Nietzsche funny and Heidegger isn't? Nietzsche's laughter of *Ausgelassenheit* as opposed to Heidegger's serenity of *Gelassenheit*: this could actually prove one of the most important differences between the two thinkers. And this is where, I guess, the rendering of Nietzsche's *Heiterkeit* as serenity drastically fails to bespeak Nietzsche's primary intimation because it actually misses his point and fits better – unintentionally even – Heidegger. Serenity is fairly far from Nietzsche's joviality

¹⁶ F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p. 299.

¹⁷ F. Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*. München/Berlin, dtv/de Gruyter, 1988, vol. X, p. 551.

of *Heiterkeit* and *Ausgelassenheit*, and much closer to Heidegger's release-ment in *Gelassenheit*.

Shouldn't we better bring it to a close? And what better way of doing this than with the help of Nietzsche's double hammer stroke:

And the path to redemption from that owlish earnestness lies only through joviality.¹⁸

**

The Gay Science
(La Gaya Scienza)

This house is my own and here I dwell,
I've never aped nothing from no one
And – laugh at each master, mark me well,
Who at himself has not poked fun.

Over my front door.¹⁹

B i b l i o g r a p h y

1. Hegel, F. (2009), *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Digireads.com Publishing.
2. Hegel, F. (1991), *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury.
3. Heidegger, M. (1967), "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra", in *Review of Metaphysics*, 20:3, Mar.
4. Heidegger, M. (2002), *Off the Beaten Track*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
5. Löwith, K. (1954), *Nietzsche's Philosophie des Ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, F. Meiner Verlag, Stuttgart.
6. Nietzsche, F. (1999), *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe [KSA]*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, dtv/de Gruyter, München/Berlin.
7. Nietzsche, F. (2006), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
8. Nietzsche, F. (1997), *Untimely Meditations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

¹⁸ F. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, p. 111.

¹⁹ F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 1.

9. Nietzsche, F. (2006), *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
10. Nietzsche, F. (2008), *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
11. Nietzsche, F. (2009), *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, Richer Resources Publications, Arlington.